

So it is in that spirit that I ask unanimous consent to make a few additional remarks in Spanish.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. PADILLA.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

Today, we are celebrating a historic moment. We are celebrating the progress that we made to ensure that the Supreme Court better reflects our country.

Judge Jackson is more than qualified and is going to bring important and necessary perspectives to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, she was attacked by Republicans during her confirmation process; but to every attack, Judge Jackson responded with grace and patience. She showed the country that she will be an exceptional Supreme Court Justice, and she will keep being an inspiration for the next generation.

Madam President, Judge—now Justice—Jackson has earned her place on the Supreme Court.

I will end by acknowledging that, while one person alone, sitting on a Court of nine equals, can't single-handedly create faith in the institution, I have every confidence that Justice Jackson will strengthen the Supreme Court and help our country progress forward.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONFIRMATION OF KETANJI BROWN JACKSON

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, an hour or so ago on the floor of the Senate was an amazing sight. It has been a long, long time since I have seen the Galleries full. COVID-19 kept us apart. I missed it. I didn't realize how much until those full Galleries were here to witness the vote on the nomination of Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court.

It was a time of great celebration for most Members of the Senate and I think for the Nation because we have achieved something which many doubted would occur.

It has been 50 years since the first African American—Thurgood Marshall—was appointed to be a member of the U.S. Supreme Court. It was another 50 years for us to wait for the opportunity to put a person, a woman of color, on the Court. And we did it today.

Soon, in the coming future, the President will be swearing in Judge, now-Justice Jackson. I am certain that she will be a credit to our Nation. She has already proven that in her lifetime of service.

Many Members of the Senate, of course, were excited and happy about it. I was one of them. I want to thank my colleagues for their kind words, but I also want to acknowledge the obvious.

All of the hard work that led up to this successful vote happened a lot behind the scenes. There were members of our staff who worked long hours—20-hour days—to prepare for this and to be ready to handle the important Judiciary Committee hearings. I would like to acknowledge the staff members on both sides of the aisle who worked tirelessly on Judge Jackson's nomination.

I have got quite a team on my side, and I am very proud of them. I want to recognize the following individuals who played an important part in this historic process: Pat Souders, my chief of staff; Joe Zogby, my Senate Judiciary Committee staff director; Dan Swanson, general counsel; Stephanie Trifone, deputy general counsel; Sally Brown-Shaklee, my deputy chief of staff; Maalik Simmons and Miriam Wheatley, my floor staff who are often sitting right in the back of this Chamber; Claire Reuschel and Riley Foti, my schedulers; my press staff, including Emily Hampsten, my communications director; Jenna Valle-Riestra; Maddie Carlos; Theresa Bordenave; and Laura Keller, and many others on my Judiciary team, including Phil Brest, who was my chief nominations counsel—he worked so hard on this, and he is so good—Sarah Bauer, who was right by his side working every minute; and Gabe Kader, as well; Ziya Smallens, speechwriter; Joe Charlet; Vaishalee Yeldandi; Maggie Hopkins; Anna Shepard; David Adeleye; Eric Chung; Eliza Lehner; Samir Sheth; David McCallum; Mady Reno; Katya Kazmin; Rachel Martinez, Yashi Gunawardena; Doug Miller; Chastidy Burns; Nicole Walton; Lane Giardina; and many, many others.

I also would like to recognize some members of Senator GRASSLEY's staff. Now, he—for those who wouldn't know—is my Republican counterpart. I chair a committee evenly divided—11 to 11—and Senator GRASSLEY is in charge of the Republican side. We have developed a strong friendship and trust over the years that really meant a lot during this process.

I want to recognize Senator GRASSLEY's staff members, in particular: Kolan Davis, his staff director of many years; Brendan Chestnut, his chief nominations counsel; and Lauren Mehler, his senior counsel for nominations.

Our two staffs worked very well together in this process, and I really appreciate that. I want to thank Senator GRASSLEY, again, for it.

I want to thank the committee's non-designated staff, including Heather Vachon, Michelle Heller, Bryan Palmer, Kara Dubbs, Shannon Bartley, Chuck Papirmeister, and others.

I want to also express my gratitude to the larger Senate community who played a part in Judge Jackson's nomination process: the staff of the Architect of the Capitol, the Sergeant at Arms, and of course the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police Force who were critical to the success of the

hearing and markups for Judge Jackson's nomination. More than 1,000 people occupied the chairs in the back of the committee room in the 4 days of hearings. It was the largest gathering, largest crowd, short of the State of the Union Address, in modern memory on the Senate. And today's Gallery attendance, again, was something, a welcome change from the forlorn empty Chamber's Galleries that we have come to be used to.

I also want to thank and add the names of the Senate staff who were so instrumental in supporting the committee's proceedings.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a list of Senate staff who were instrumental in supporting the committee's proceedings.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Ronda Stewart	SAA—Security Planning and Police Coordination Director
Wendy Colmore	SAA—Access Control and Transportation Director
Jaivon Gibbs	SAA—Police Coordination Analyst
Amanda Simmons	SAA—Senior Program Manager
Mike Mastrian	SAA—Radio & TV Director
Erin Yeatman	SAA—Sr. Media Relations Coordinator
Tamara Robinson	SAA—Media Relations Coordinator
Charles Moxley	SAA—Media Relations Coordinator
Jeff Kent	SAA—Press Photographers Director
Mark Abraham	SAA—Press Photographers Deputy Director
Tricia Munro	SAA—Press Photographers, Senior Assistant Director
Matt Grant	SAA—Press Photographers, Assistant Director
Justin Wilson	SAA—Periodical Press Director
Spencer Barks	SAA—Media Relations Coordinator
Lindsey Bowen	SAA—Media Relations Coordinator
Laura Lytle	SAA—Daily Press Director
Kristyn Socknat	SAA—Daily Press, Sr. Media Relations Coordinator
Amy Gross	SAA—Daily Press, Sr. Media Relations Coordinator
Kate Leavitt	SAA—Daily Press, Media Relations Assistant
Inspector John Erickson	USCP Senate Division
Captain Kenneth Wheeler	USCP Senate Division
Captain Matthew Tighe	USCP Senate Division
Lieutenant Vidal Adams	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant Adam Descamp	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant David Van Benschoten	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant John Ruskoski	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant Howard Jaslow	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant Jeffery Andrews	USCP Senate Division
Sergeant Charles Nelson	USCP Senate Division

Mr. DURBIN. With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WARNOCK). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I am one of the few parents of young children in the Senate. But almost every one of us here is a parent, so you know that one of the most spectacular things your kid can do is to write you a letter. Sometimes—frankly, most of the time—when I have gotten those letters,

it is because my kid wants to protest something that I have done. I have gotten a few of those where my kids are so upset about a rule or a decision that we have made as parents, they sit down and they catalog their grievances on paper.

Maybe if you are lucky, you get a nice letter. My in-laws have one still plastered up on their wall from their youngest daughter who wrote them a nice list when she was young about the things she appreciated. But those “Dear Mommy” or “Dear Daddy” letters, that is one of the rare joys of parenthood.

On March 6, 2018, Patricia Verbeeck awoke to find one of those letters for her left by her child Eric. It was laying on the pillow of his bed. She picked it up, and she read it to herself. “Dear Mommy,” her child wrote. Maybe her eyes twinkled thinking of what sweet or funny thoughts might come next. But this is what the letter said:

Dear Mommy, I am sorry to do this to you, but I have killed myself by jumping off the top floor, the 12th floor, of your building . . . at the nearest stair exit to the elevators on that floor.

I felt I could no longer live my life as a lie, living as a boy, instead of the girl I knew I could become. I am sorry I lied to you. I was losing hope in the world and could not see my way out of the wrong body and I decided it was time for my life to end . . .

As you might imagine, Patricia didn’t get beyond that first line. Upon reading it, she dropped the letter, and she ran straight to her balcony and below, she saw the vague outline of a body and police officers surrounding it.

I follow President Trump’s family members on social media. I do it because I know how influential they are. I know how many Americans—good, decent Americans—admire them and listen to what they say.

Lately, the posts from Trump’s family members have just been of one theme: America should fear transgender children. The Trump family and their network of supporters and sycophants have decided that Eric Verbeeck and other kids like them are the No. 1 problem facing America today. And over the past year, this crowd has orchestrated a relentless and unceasing campaign to marginalize, demonize, and bully kids whose gender identity is different from their biological sex.

This year alone, Republican State legislatures across the country have introduced 150 bills to deny rights to transgender Americans.

Today, the Alabama legislature introduced legislation that is fast-tracked, from what I understand, to become law that makes it a felony—a felony—for a doctor to provide healthcare to a transgender child. In Texas, the Governor directed his child welfare agency to investigate parents like Patricia who are simply determined to support their children if they help them secure the gender-affirming treatment they need. Criminalizing parents of transgender children is just around the corner in some States.

In Congress, Trump’s allies spent more time talking about transgender kids than they spent talking about healthcare or taxes or education. Congresswoman MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE—perhaps Trump’s best ally in the House—had a sign outside her office calling the experience of transpeople a “fiction” just to bully her hallway neighbor, Representative MARIE NEWMAN, who has a transgender daughter.

And in the Supreme Court hearings here last month, at least one Senator used their time on the national stage to suggest that the entire idea of being transgender is a leftwing hoax.

All across America, Republicans—not all Republicans but the Trump wing of the Republican Party has declared war against transgender kids, and these children have noticed. A recent survey of transgender youth showed that half of them—52 percent—had contemplated suicide over the last year.

Just think about that for a second, my colleagues, half of all the kids who are transgender come to the conclusion at some point in their young lives that they would be better off dead than live in a world that believes they are threats to be marginalized or expunged. That is a national crisis, and we need to talk, honestly and candidly, about what has led us to this moment.

We need to start by acknowledging that this conversation is long overdue. This dialogue about transgender children, it may feel new, but transgender kids aren’t, transgender adults aren’t. The only difference between today and, say, 50 years ago, is that today there is space for kids and adults to be open about who they truly are.

We are all born with a biological sex. And centuries of tightly controlled constructs about what a man should be and what a man should act like and what a woman should be and what a woman should act like, they have sort-of human beings into personality and professional profiles based on that gender.

But there are many of us—this has been the case for human history—who don’t associate with the gender that biological chance ascribed to us. There are people who are assigned male at birth who feel, in their bones, that they are female. That is what Eric felt. That is what Eric knew. And there are people who are assigned female at birth, but know, they just know, that they are male.

And there is nothing wrong with that. That process of figuring out which gender you identify with, it poses no threat to anyone. But we do have to acknowledge how hard it is, given those centuries of gender identity and stereotypes, for some Americans to understand what a kid like Eric was going through.

For Americans, for instance, who were born a male and feel like a male and who are surrounded by family and friends who associate with a gender that matches the sex they were born

into, the whole notion of a boy becoming a girl or a girl becoming a boy—I get it—that can be disconcerting. It can be difficult to understand. But I also know that this discomfort will pass as more Americans learn what I have learned. Transgender and non-binary children aren’t any different than any other kids.

You might not know a transgender or nonbinary kid, but, trust, me, you do. You know what these kids are like because they are no different than any other children. My son has transgender and nonbinary friends. He has nontransgender friends, but when they are all sitting around our kitchen after school, there is no difference between them in terms of how they act and how they talk, what they are like, what they like, what they don’t like. They are kids. They are just kids.

And so here is my message to the adults with power who have decided to spend their days bullying these kids: Stop it. Grow up. So you are not ready to accept transgender people, fine. I hope you come around someday. But these kids threaten no one. They are hurting no one.

And, well, there are important conversations we need to have about how we include transgender kids fully in sports. I could walk into a room of a thousand people in my State and ask how many of them have had a child lose a sporting event to a transgender girl and not a single hand would raise.

Saving girls sports is not the reason why Donald Trump and MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE and their whole political movement has made bullying transgender kids their top priority. No, it is their top priority because they know hate and fear of what some people don’t understand has a habit of selling in this country. I wish that weren’t true, but it has always been true.

There is always going to be a constituency in America that will listen to an argument for why Black people or Mexicans or Muslims or gay people or transgender people are ruining America, why we should fear them.

It is not true. It has never been true. But demagogues and their movements, they tend not to have actual ideas, things they are for. Demagogues normally just focus on what they hate.

Let me say it again. Half of all transgender children in this country have thought to themselves, at some point, that they would be better off dead than live in a world where so many people fear them. That is heartbreaking to know that we are doing that to these kids.

Being a teenager today—I know; I have one—with social media and the pandemic, it is hard enough, but imagine being a teenager who wakes up every day knowing that they aren’t the gender they were assigned by biology at birth. Imagine keeping your feelings about that secret for years, worried—worried—about what your parents or your friends might say.

Imagine the anguish of a scared 12-year-old or 14-year-old sitting in bed

awake for hours each night trying to process all of that alone with no help. Imagine the courage it then takes for that kid to have the first conversation with a parent or a friend. And then layer on top of that some of the most powerful people in the world deciding to use their power not to cure disease or end poverty or hunger but instead to use their power to target those very scared, desperate kids and to use their powers to harass and bully and shame them.

Imagine how small, how insecure, how weak a person must be to have all that power and to use it to bully children.

Seth Walsh was gay, not transgender, but his experience was not much different than Eric's. Students at his school were systematic in their targeting of him because of his sexual orientation. They pushed him down the stairs. They kicked him until he was badly bruised. They screamed at him. They called him names. No doubt these bullies took direction and inspiration from adults who paved the way, who endorsed this kind of hateful behavior.

One day, after one of these incidents, a frightened Seth called his mom and he said: "Mom, you have to come get me right now." His mom could feel—hear the fear in his voice, and so she grabbed Seth's little brother and they got in the car and they rushed to pick him up. His mom was so supportive. That afternoon they sat and they talked.

Seth took a shower to calm himself down, and afterward he asked his mom for a pen and told her that he was going to go outside and play with the dogs. About 10 minutes later, his mom went outside to continue this conversation with her son, but it was too late. Seth had hung himself from a tree. The pen that he asked for was for his suicide note.

I tell you these stories because they are consequences of adults' behavior. Donald Trump and MARJORIE TAYLOR GREENE and their ilk, they aren't murderers, but make no mistake, there is a direct through line from the hateful words and the policies of leaders and the misery that too many transgender, nonbinary, and gay kids are going through today.

But I am also here to tell you that Trump and TAYLOR GREENE, others like them, they are not the majority. And I want to make sure that I finish by sending a message to transgender children and adults that these hateful people, this movement that is growing out there to try to target you, it is not going to win. We are going to build a community of love and protection for you. No matter how bad things may seem right now, they are going to get better. The world is going to get kinder. Adults are going to learn their lessons. And if you don't have it now, as you are struggling with your identity, you will find a support structure that will nurture and support you. It is out there for you. You should be who

you are. Don't feel like you need to hide your true self just because of these idiot adults who feel big by bullying people who are different from them.

Be who you are and know that there are a whole lot of us who are going to work our tails off to support you, to love you, and to make sure that you get a chance to thrive—because in the long run, the bullies never win. They never do.

I yield the floor.

APPOINTMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Republican Leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 117-81, appoints the following individual to serve as a member of the Afghanistan War Commission: Seth Jones of Virginia.

REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION OF SECRECY—TREATY DOCUMENT NO. 117-2

Mr. MURPHY. I ask unanimous consent that the injunction of secrecy be removed from the following treaty transmitted to the Senate on April 7, 2022, by the President of the United States: the extradition treaty with the Republic of Albania, Treaty Document No. 117-2. I further ask that the treaty be considered as having been read the first time; that it be referred with accompanying papers to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed; and that the President's message be printed in the RECORD.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The message of the President is as follows:

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Albania (the "Treaty"), signed at Tirana on December 22, 2020. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty would replace the extradition treaty between the United States and Albania, signed at Tirana on March 1, 1933. The Treaty follows generally the form and content of other extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. It would replace an outmoded list of extraditable offenses with a modern "dual criminality" approach, which would enable extradition for such offenses as money laundering, cyber-related crimes, and other newer offenses not appearing on the list. The Treaty also contains a modernized "political offense" clause and provides that extradition shall not be refused based on the nationality of the person sought. Finally, the Treaty incorporates a series

of procedural improvements to streamline and expedite the extradition process.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

JOSEPH R. BIDEN, Jr.
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 7, 2022.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 646, 790, 814, 863, 864; that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc without intervening action or debate; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations of Oren E. Whyche-Shaw, of Maryland, to be United States Director of the African Development Bank for a term of five years; Adriana Debora Kugler, of Maryland, to be United States Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of two years; Steven H. Fagin, of New Jersey, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Yemen; Erik Kristopher Raven, of the District of Columbia, to be Under Secretary of the Navy; and William A. LaPlante, Jr., of Massachusetts, to be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment? The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

APPOINTMENTS AUTHORITY

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences, or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

STRENGTHENING OVERSIGHT FOR VETERANS ACT OF 2021

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate